

Harry L. Riggs, Jr.
513-977-8186
harry.riggs@dinslaw.com

April 13, 2004

Docket Management System, U.S. DOT
Room Plaza 401
400 Seventh St., SW
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

FAA-98-4521-2065

**RE: Comments of the Prairie Aviation Museum to Docket No.
FAA-1998-4521; Notice No. 03-10**

Dear Sirs:

The following comments are submitted by the undersigned as Special Counsel on behalf of the Prairie Aviation Museum ("Museum"), located at Central Illinois Regional Airport, Bloomington, Illinois.

The Museum was founded in 1983 as an Illinois not-for-profit corporation. It was established to maintain an organization dedicated to the preservation, operation and display of historically significant aircraft. The Museum is supported by volunteers and contributors who give of their time and money to support the numerous displays of vintage and military aircraft, including artifacts from both civilian and military aviation.

On December 17, 2003, exactly 100 years to the date that the Wright Brothers first flew at Kittyhawk, the Museum dedicated the first phase of its new home at Central Illinois Regional Airport in Bloomington, Illinois. The new 5,000 square foot structure, to be later expanded to 49,000 square feet, will be a showcase of activity for people of all ages. School children will take part in an exciting introduction to science and aviation. Families will have new opportunities to learn and grow together. In addition, area businesses will benefit from programs that help build team and job skills in a creative, stimulating environment. All Museum programs are being developed by talented educators and experienced Museum personnel. The Museum has undertaken the project of creating a Challenger Learning Center. In this facility, which replicates a launch center as well as a portion of the Space Lab, grade school and high school students will have the opportunity to participate and share the experience of simulated space flight. Launched in 1986 by the families of the astronauts lost in the Challenger space shuttle disaster, the Challenger Learning Center network has allowed thousands to sample the adventures of space exploration. Through highly acclaimed teaching methods, the program encourages the mastery of math and science, while fostering the development of critical life skills. One of the Challenger Learning Centers established at the Museum, will play a major role in the future of the Museum and will be a great resource for the community.

One of the Museum's major assets is a 1942 Douglas C-53 airplane which was a military version of the DC-3. After extensive renovation, the DC-3 was restored to Ozark Airline's colors and interior configurations. The exterior of the airplane was painted in Ozark Airline's typical green colors and the interior airline seating configuration was established to conform to Ozark Airline's seating configuration with the colors of the seats in green and white. The restoration of the airplane to Ozark Airline's colors and configurations was so complete and detailed, that it is only one of seven airplanes listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.

Under the exemption provisions contained in 14 CFR 119.1(e)(2), the aircraft travels throughout the Midwestern portion of the United States to appear at airshow events and other aviation-related activities where a fee is charged for passenger rides. Passengers are given an opportunity to experience the thrill of a ride in an airplane, the design of which revolutionized the commercial airline industry of the 1930's and played a critical role in the allied victory during World War II. The Museum's DC-3 serves as a roving ambassador of air travel that existed in the 1940's, 1950's and into the late 1960's that has long passed by. Many of the visitors who experienced the thrill of riding in this most unique airplane were both men and women who flew in the airplane during World War II and into the Korean War. Many have brought their children and grandchildren to the airplane to experience the ride that their forefathers did while serving in the United States Armed Forces. To the best of the Museum's knowledge and belief, there are no other DC-3 aircraft flying in the United States today that are restored to an early airline's configuration and carry passengers for a small fee.

The Museum has been approved under Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code.

GENERAL COMMENTS

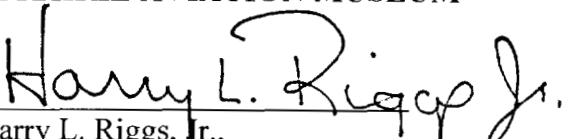
The Museum has reviewed in detail the FAA Docket referenced herein. The officials of the Museum have also read and reviewed in detail the comments to that Docket submitted by Mr. Earl Lawrence, Vice President, Industry and Regulatory Affairs, on behalf of the Experimental Aircraft Association ("EAA") in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The Museum adopts and ratifies those comments as though fully set out herein. The EAA's comments carefully articulate and outline its response and objections to the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and its substantiating data. The Museum agrees that the proposed sweeping changes to commercial and non-commercial passenger-carrying operations are not justified by historic safety data, nor is there sufficient evidence that safety will be enhanced by these proposals.

Docket Management System, U.S. DOT
April 13, 2004
Page Three

Therefore, rather than add to the bulk of material already submitted to the Docket in reply to the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, the Museum will adopt and defer to the EAA's comments.

Respectfully submitted,

THE PRAIRIE AVIATION MUSEUM

BY: 
Harry L. Riggs, Jr.,
Special Counsel

HLR/kj

cc: FAA Administrator, Marion Blakey, AOA-1
FAA Associate Administrator-Regulation & Certification, Nick Sabatini, AVR-1
FAA Director Flight Standards, Jim Ballough, AFS-1